

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 STATE 093839
ORIGIN ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-02 L-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 PA-02 SP-02 ICAE-00 INRE-00 /034 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/PAN:JCHAAHR/JLP
APPROVED BY ARA/PAN:JCHAAHR
-----106322 122025Z /72

O 121956Z APR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 093839

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PEBR, PN

SUBJECT: WASHINGTON STAR STORY, APRIL 12, RE PANAMA CANAL
TREATIES

FOLLOWING IS STORY IN TODAY'S WASHINGTON STAR BY W. TAYLOR:

QUOTE: SEN. DENNIS DECONCINI, WHOSE AMENDMENT TO THE PANAMA
CANAL TREATIES HAS BROUGHT STORMY PROTESTS FROM PANAMA,
PLANS TO SPONSOR ANOTHER PROVISION THAT STATE DEPARTMENT
OFFICIALS BELIEVE ALSO COULD BE TROUBLING TO THE PANAMANIAN.

QUOTE: KEY SUPPORTERS OF THE TREATIES IN THE SENATE WERE
STILL GRAPPLING WITH PROPOSALS TO ASSUAGE PANAMANIAN ANGER
OVER THE FIRST DECONCINI-BACKED ALTERATION WHEN THE ARIZONA
DEMOCRAT YESTERDAY SPELLED OUT PLANS FOR A SECOND AMENDMENT
TO THE PACTS.

QUOTE: AS HE DESCRIBED IT TO REPORTERS, THE SECOND
DECONCINI CHANGE - A PROPOSED 'RESERVATION', OR CONDITION
TO THE TREATIES - WOULD PERMIT THE UNITED STATES TO USE
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 093839

MILITARY FORCE TO PUT DOWN, ANYWHERE IN PANAMA, WHAT IT
PERCEIVES TO BE A THREAT TO THE OPERATION OF THE CANAL
DURING THE 22-YEAR TRANSITION OF THE CANAL FROM U.S. TO
PANAMANIAN CONTROL.

QUOTE: ALTHOUGH DECONCINI DESCRIBED IT AS A 'VERY SIMPLE
CLAIFYING STATEMENT' TO AUTHORITY ALREADY IMPLICIT IN THE

TREATIES, HIS NEWEST PROPOSAL WOULD SEEM TO GIVE THE UNITED STATES MORE AUTHORITY THAN IT HAS EVEN NOW TO INTER- VENE MILITARILY IN PANAMA TO PROTECT THE NEUTRALITY OF THE CANAL.

QUOTE: UNDER AN AGREEMENT WITH PANAMA DATING TO THE MID- 1930'S, THE UNITED STATES IS LIMITED IN ITS ACTIONS TO THE 10-MILE-WIDE PANAMA CANAL ZONE.

QUOTE: WITHOUT HAVING SEEN A FINAL TEXT OF THE LATEST DECONCINI PROPOSAL, A STATEMENT OFFICIAL DESCRIBED THE RESERVATION AS 'A POTENTIAL NEW PROBLEM' FOR THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION IN TRYING TO WIN THE CONSTITUTIONALLY PRE- SCRIBED TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY IN THE SENATE WITHOUT MAKING THE AGREEMENTS UNACCEPTABLE TO PANAMA.

QOOTE: 'THERE'S NO QUESTION, IT WOULD MAKE IT VERY DIFFI- CULT TO THE PANAMANIAN...IT CAUSES US EXTREME PROBLEMS', SAID ANOTHER OFFICIAL OF THE DEPARTMENT WORKING FOR TREATY PASSAGE.

QUOTE: MEANWHILE, TREATY BACKERS CONTINUED HAVING DIFFI- CULTIES WORKING OUT A MEANS FOR ENDING THE CONTROVERSY SPARKED BY THE ORIGINAL 'DECONCINI RESERVATION', A PRO- VISION ADOPTED BY THE SENATE LAST MONTH THAT WOULD PERMIT THE UNITED STATES TO UNILATERALLY RECOMMIT MILITARY FORCES UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 093839

TO PROTECT THE CANAL AFTER THE YEAR 2000, WHEN TOTAL CON- TROL OF THE WATERWAY IS SHIFTED TO PANAMA.

QUOTE: PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS, EVIDENTLY BACKED BY STRONG PUBLIC SENTIMENT IN THEIR COUNTRY, HAVE COMPLAINED THAT THE PROVISION IS INSULTING TO THEIR NATIONAL PRIDE BECAUSE IT CONCEIVABLY COULD INJECT THE UNITED STATES INTO THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF PANAMA.

QUOTE: ASSERTIONS BY A VARIETY OF PRO-TRE7TY SENATORS AND ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS THAT THIS WAS NOT THE INTENTION OF THE SENATE WHEN IT ADOPTED THE RESERVATION HAVE FAILED TO PLACATE THE PANAMANIAN.

QUOTE: BY THE SAME TOKEN, PROPOSED ACTIONS TO MEET OBJECTIONS IN PANAMA THUS FAR HAVE FAILED TO WIN ACCEPTANCE BY DECONCINI.

QUOTE: SENATE DEMOCRATIC LEADER ROBERT C. BYRD OF WEST VIRGINIA AND ANOTHER LEADING TREATY SUPPORTER IN THE SENATE, FRANK CHURCH, D-IDAHO, REPORTEDLY PROPOSED A SERIES OF ACTIONS LATE YESTERDAY DESIGNED TO SOFTEN THE 'INTER-

VENTIONIST' RING IN THE DECONCINI PROVISION, ONLY TO HAVE DECONCINI REJECT THE SUGGESTION. THE PRECISE DETAILS OF THE LEADERSHIP PROPOSAL WERE NOT DISCLOSED BY PARTICIPANTS IN THE MEETING.

QUOTE: PRESIDENT CARTER TODAY WAS TO TRY HIS HAND AT WORKING OUT SOME ACCOMMODATION WITH THE FIRST-TERM LAW-MAKER, WHO WAS ELECTED TO THE SENATE LESS THAN TWO YEARS AGO BUT WHO IS CHARACTERIZED BY OPPONENTS AND SUPPORTERS ALIKE AS THE POSSIBLE MAKE-OR-BREAK VOTE FOR THE TREATIES.

QUOTE: WITH KNOWLEDGE OF PANAMANIAN OBJECTIONS, CARTER RELUCTANTLY ACCEPTED DECONCINI'S FIRST RESERVATION LAST MONTH, EVIDENTLY BECAUSE HIS SUPPORT WAS CONSIDERED CRUCIAL UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 093839

TO SENATE ADOPTION OF THE FIRST OF THE TWO CANAL AGREEMENTS.

QUOTE: SEN. PAUL LAXALT, R-NEV., A LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION FORCES, UNDERSCORED THE CONTINUED IMPORTANCE OF DECONCINI TO THE ADMINISTRATION WITH A CLAIM YESTERDAY THAT HE WAS WITHIN ONE VOTE OF THE 34 NEEDED TO BLOCK THE AGREEMENTS IN FINAL SENATE ACTION ON THE PACTS, SCHEDULED FOR NEXT TUESDAY.

QUOTE: THUS, TREATY BACKERS WERE TRYING TO PROD THE ARIZONA DEMOCRAT TO SOFTEN HIS PROVISIONS - BUT WERE DOING SO EVER SO DELICATELY.

QUOTE: 'IT'S PRETTY MUCH UP TO HIM', CHURCH SAID WHEN ASKED WHAT STEPS COULD BE TAKEN TO PACIFY THE PANAMANIANS.

QUOTE: FOR HIS PART, DECONCINI SAID HIS CONTROVERSIAL FIRST RESERVATION WAS NOT MEANT TO INVOLVE THE UNITED STATES GENERALLY IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS OF PANAMA. HE CONCEDED, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH INTERVENTION MIGHT BE INVOLVED IF THE OPERATION OF THE CANAL WERE THREATENED BY ACTIVITIES WITHIN PANAMA.

QUOTE: HIS AMENDMENT, HE SAID, WOULD GIVE THE UNITED STATES THE RIGHT 'TO TAKE WHATEVER ACTION NECESSARY, INCLUDING MILITARY FORCE, IN PANAMA IF THE CANAL IS CLOSED'.

QUOTE: 'IT DOES NOT MEAN', HE ADDED, 'THAT WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE INVOLVED IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF PANAMA UNLESS THE CANAL IS CLOSED.'

QUOTE: DECONCINI SAID HE COULD NOT SUPPORT ANY PROPOSED CLARIFICATION OF HIS RESERVATION THAT IMPLIED ANY LIMIT UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 093839

TATIONS ON U.S. RIGHTS TO KEEP THE CANAL OPEN ONCE THE
TRANSITION PROCESS SPELLED OUT IN THE TREATIES IS BEGUN.
'IF WE START JOCKEYING AROUND ON THE INTERPRETATION OF
THIS AMENDMENT OF MINE, IT SEEMS LIKE WE ARE THEN STEPPING
BACK, WHEN ALL WE WANTED WAS TO CLARIFY' EXISTING TREATY
LANGUAGE.

QUOTE: ASKED IF HE MIGHT SOFTEN HIS POSITION IF TOLD BY
THE PRESENT TODAY THAT HIS AMENDMENTS MIGHT LEAD TO PANA-
MANIAN REJECTION OF THE AGREEMENTS, DECONCINI TOLD
REPORTERS:

QUOTE: 'I DON'T KNOW. I'D HAVE TO CONSIDER IT. MY
IMMEDIATE REACTION IS NO, BUT I WANT TO BE FAIR AND NOT
GO INTO (THE MEETING WITH CARTER) WITH A CLOSED MIND.'

QUOTE: DECONCINI SAID HE WAS SENSITIVE TO OBJECTIONS
RAISED BY PANAMA TO HIS PROVISIONS, BUT HE SAID HE FELT
HIS FIRST DUTY WAS TO PROTECT WHAT HE BELIEVES TO BE THE
BEST INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES. 'I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN
FOR A NEW TREATY', HE SAID, ADDING, HOWEVER, THAT HE
FOUND THE AGREEMENTS UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE SENATE
FLAWED.

QUOTE: WITHOUT CHANGES, HE SAID, HE WOULD HAVE 'NO
QUALMS' ABOUT VOTING AGAINST THE AGREEMENTS, EVEN IF HIS
DECISION BLOCKED RATIFICATION. END QUOTE. VANCE

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, AGREEMENTS, TREATY RATIFICATION, CANALS, NEUTRALISM
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE093839
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JCHAAHR/JLP
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780157-0704
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780465/aaaaccyv.tel
Line Count: 202
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1925d0b1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2992071
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WASHINGTON STAR STORY, APRIL 12, RE PANAMA CANAL TREATIES FOLLOWING IS STORY IN TODAY'S WASHINGTON STAR BY W
TAGS: PEPR, SOPN, PN, US, WASHINGTON STAR
To: PANAMA
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1925d0b1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014